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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 06 NEW DELHI 000161

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [OVIP](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [ENRG](#) [MNUC](#)

IN, PK, BG

SUBJECT: D/NSA SUPPORTS INTEL SHARING ON TERRORISM; SAYS
TERROR IN SOUTH NOT NEW BUT TACTICS AND TARGETS ARE

REF: A. CHENNAI 24

[B](#). CHENNAI 17

[C](#). 05 NEW DELHI 9008

Classified By: DCM Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#). (C) Summary: In a January 9 meeting with the DCM (other topics reported Septel), Deputy NSA Vijay Nambiar pledged to seek the NSA's approval for greater intelligence sharing on terrorism threats within India, particularly as the upswing in USG official visits and US investment increases the potential for a US person or entity being the victim of a terrorist attack. He noted that terrorism in southern India stretches back more than 20 years, but terrorists appear to be changing their tactics and targets, to include the IT sector and nuclear power installations. Regions and venues that had in the past little concern over terrorist attacks must now bolster their defenses. End Summary.

Nambiar Supports Sharing Intel on Threats

[2](#). (C) The DCM noted that the Embassy RSO has received good operational support from the Delhi Police and intelligence sharing on the bilateral level has been improving, especially in recent months, but there is a gap at the level of sharing of strategic terrorism information about specific threats. In response to the DCM's request, Nambiar agreed to the

utility of having someone at the Home Ministry or National Security Council Secretariat as a point of contact to deconflict Indian press and think-tank reporting on terrorist threats, and said he would confer with NSA Narayanan.

Southern Threat Not New ...

13. (C) To the DCM's query of whether the Embassy should advise the influx of high-level USG visitors to southern India, including Bangalore and Hyderabad, Nambiar noted that terrorism in southern QM.nc4c?Qat Swami "obviously has been briefed, most likely by the Intelligence Bureau (IB)," and added that the article conformed to his information on terrorism trends in the region over the past 20 years (see para 9 for full text of article). Nambiar added that GOI intelligence is currently reporting the activation of dormant Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad, and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh cells in southern India that were originally recruited as far back as the late 1990s. NSCS Additional Secretary SD Pradhan remarked that Pakistan-based al-Umar had operated from Chennai, and that Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh and the Students' Islamic Movement of India maintain bases in the south. More details are emerging, and the IB is closely watching LeT subgroups in Mumbai and Andhra Pradesh, he continued. Nambiar reiterated that what the intelligence agencies report is not a recent influx of terrorists, but the activation of cells that in some cases have been in place for

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several years.

13. (C) Nambiar cautioned that a new tactic may be emerging, the targeting of "high-visibility" individuals, including politicians, government officials, and civilians in the private (especially IT) sector. When the DCM asked if USG VIPs visiting cities in southern India were at an increased risk of attack, Nambiar responded that "we have not yet reached the threshold of saying we would rather not have VIPs visit," although he admitted that "the security there needs greater tightening." "The normal VIP circuit" enjoys good security, but Nambiar acknowledged that police in cities such as Bangalore and Hyderabad are not used to the scope of terrorism seen in northern India, and recent non-traditional targets such as academics (Ref B) and IT businesses (Ref A) has been a "wake-up call" to sections of the public who are used to dismissing general terrorism advisories because, they ask, "who would want to target me?" as well as to institutions that has previously considered themselves off the terrorists' radar scope. He also noted that "a normal seasonal trend" is for India to suffer an uptick in terrorist attacks prior to the January 26 Republic Day celebration, and that NSA Narayanan had recently commented that his own security detail had recently grown.

... But New Targets are Emerging

15. (C) Pradhan pointed to potential threats emanating from Bangladesh. "All their jihadist literature lists the US, UK, Israel, and India as their targets," he explained, adding that the porous Indo-Bangladesh border permits easy entree for terrorists. Pradhan remarked that some terrorist groups plan to target India's nuclear facilities as a means symbolically to attack India and the US simultaneously, and added that Indian intelligence believes the team that attacked the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore also planned to attack the Bhabha Atomic Research Center in Mumbai.

Following the Money

16. (C) Pradhan explained that activating one of these terrorist sleeper cells involved sending the group a tasking and funds. Money may arrive as cash, a credit card transfer,

or a hawala transaction, and the group would receive no further communications after the tasking and money are delivered, to reduce the likelihood of discovery. He noted that Pakistan-based groups tend to use hawala dealers that route through Dubai or Saudi Arabia. Another funding method is via phony purchases to established businesses, particularly Kashmiri crafts or the Mumbai diamond market, which disguises the transfer as a routine sale.

The Changing Face of Terrorism

17. (C) Pradhan also noted that the terrorists themselves are different and more adaptable. For example, "Arshad," who was

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arrested on December 18 in connection with the October 12 suicide attack on the Hyderabad Police Special Task Force office, was a police informer who benefited from a police security escort; Tariq Ahmed Dar, who was arrested for allegedly masterminding the Diwali bombings (Ref C), enjoyed "good cover" as a sales representative for the US MNC Johnson & Johnson. "They are smarter, more literate, and able to hide and move around more freely" than the stereotypical jihadi terrorist.

Comment: Caution, Worry, but Not Panic

18. (C) Nambiar's remarks were clearly geared to caution us on emerging trends of terrorists seeking new, soft, and highly visible targets, without creating a sense of panic that the ceiling is about to collapse. His comment that some regions and venues may be targeted for the first time and hence will lack sufficient protection underlines the importance of ramping up counter-terrorism collaboration, and we believe he took seriously our request for more Indian information on domestic terrorism, to include a permanent GOI point of contact in Delhi who would serve as a real-time resource. As US-India ties overall continue to broaden and deepen, we will likely find that Indian intelligence will eventually help save US lives, among the more than 65,000 AmCits living and working in India.

Text of "Hindu" Article "Behind Bangalore"

19. (U) Begin text:

Behind Bangalore: the origins of the long jihad

Praveen Swami

The first part of an investigation into how the Lashkar-e-Taiba's terror campaign against India was born, and the forces that drive it today.

"TODAY, INSHALLAH, I announce the break-up of India," thundered Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, the patron of the Lashkar-e-Taiba at a giant November 1999 rally organized by its parent organization, the Markaz Dawat wal Irshad.

Held just months after the Kargil war, the Markaz rally was organized to proclaim to the world that Pakistan's principal Islamist group had not bowed in the face of what it saw as a humiliating, western-authored capitulation to India. "We will not rest," Saeed assured his audience, "until the whole of India is dissolved into Pakistan." In a subsequent speech Saeed promised the mujahideen he was sending to India that "Allah will save them from the fires of hell," and that "huge palaces in paradise" awaited those martyred by "infidel enemies."

Saeed's speech was to set off events that could have led to the obliteration of much of South Asia. Two years after it

was delivered, an escalating spiral of jihadist attacks carried out by the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad culminated in the December 3, 2001, attack on India's Parliament House. Indian troops moved forward to offensive positions along the border with Pakistan. Until some indelicate arm-twisting by the United States led Pakistan to promise an end to jihadist activities against India, it appeared there was no escape from a war that could only too easily have escalated into a nuclear exchange.

Less than four years after that near-catastrophe, Indians have had to confront a renewed wave of jihadist terrorism: the December 28 Lashkar-e-Taiba attack on the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, and the serial bombing of New Delhi just weeks earlier, have made clear the war Saeed had promised is far from over.

A few bored residents of Mumbai's Mominpura slum were the only witnesses of a protracted harangue by an obscure West Bengal cleric named Abu Masood, declaring the birth of what would become the Indian wing of the Lashkar-e-Taiba: the Tanzim Islahul Muslimeen, or the Organisation for the Improvement of Muslims.

In the summer of 1985, inflamed by a wave of communal violence that had ripped apart the town of Bhiwandi, activists of the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadis' ultra-right Gorba faction had gathered to discuss the need for Muslim reprisal. Azam Ghauri, the fifth of the 11 children of an impoverished Hyderabad family who had flirted with the People's War Group before discovering religion, spoke with passion of the community's need for a Shiv Sena-style vigilante organization. Abdul Karim Tunda, yet to earn the nickname that stuck after he lost his left arm in a bomb-making accident, also delivered a speech.

Both men would go on to build a terror apparatus that now has the capacity to strike nationwide. In the late-1980s, though, the TIM's activities barely merited an entry in the local police station's diary of community events. Mimicking the drills of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's shakhas, Ghauri and Karim paraded their recruits around the grounds of the Young Men's Christian Association. Most of the TIM's membership consisted of young Mominpura residents who felt upset at the pervasive discrimination against Muslims in Mumbai, and were concerned about widespread communal riots.

Among the TIM's most enthusiastic recruits was Jalees Ansari, the son of worker at the now-closed Raghuvanshi Mill on Tulsi Pipe Road. Ansari's father, who had arrived as a penniless laborer from Uttar Pradesh, managed to save enough to give his children a future. In 1972, Ansari graduated from the Maratha College at Nagpara, and, after earning a degree in medicine from the Sion Medical College, started to work for the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation. Despite his success, Ansari was embittered by communalism. Students and staff at the Maratha College, Ansari later alleged, often insulted Muslims, and his Hindu colleagues did not treat their Muslim patients with care.

On December 6, 1992, the day Hindu fanatics demolished the Babri Masjid, the doctor decided the time had come to give up his practice of medicine and to start to kill instead. Precisely a year after the Babri Masjid was brought down, Ansari organized a series of 43 small bombings in Mumbai and Hyderabad and seven separate explosions on inter-city trains. While most of the explosions were small, they were a demonstration of the group's formidable discipline and skills. Central Bureau of Investigations agents caught up with Ansari just 13 days before he was to set off a second series of reprisal bombings, this time scheduled for India's

Republic Day in 1994.

Both Karim and Ghauri, however, had by then disappeared. Karim traveled to Kolkata, and with the help of the TIM's old contacts in the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadis, traveled on to Dhaka. There he was taken under the wing of Zaki-ur-Rahman, a longstanding Lashkar-e-Taiba commander who had been tasked with developing the terror group's operational capabilities outside of Jammu and Kashmir. Ghauri, for his part, hid out in Andhra Pradesh until he was able to obtain a fake passport. He then left for Saudi Arabia. In 1995, Indian intelligence officials believe, a Saudi national Hamid Bahajib arranged for his travel to Pakistan * and to a Lashkar training camp.

The Lashkar's warp and weft

Karim and Ghauri knit together networks as elaborate as the most intricate Persian carpet: a carpet that had pan-India connections as its warp and transnational connections as its weft.

By 1996, operating through the Dhaka-based Islamic Chattra Shibir (Islamic Students Organisation), Karim was running a formidable network throughout north India: what Lashkar headquarters called the Mohammad bin-Qasim dasta, or squad. Amongst his first recruits was Amir Hashim, a young Delhi resident who had just completed his seventh grade at the Mazrul Islam Higher Secondary School when his family moved to Karachi. In Pakistan, Hashim discovered the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadis. From late 1994, he began to work for the Lashkar's new office in Karachi. He returned to India in 1996, and promptly executed a series of bombings in Delhi, Rohtak, and Jalandhar.

Pakistani nationals also had an important role in Karim's operations. In July 1998, for example, the Delhi Police arrested Abdul Sattar, a resident of Pakistan's Faisalabad district who had set up a covert terror cell in the town of Khurja. A year later, the Jammu and Kashmir Police broke up a cell run by another Pakistani, Amir Khan, with operatives in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Delhi. Perhaps the most successful of the Lashkar's agents was Mohammad Ishtiaq, the son of a shopkeeper from Kala Gujran in Pakistan's Jhelum district. Operating under the alias Salim Junaid, Ishtiaq obtained an Indian passport, set up a trucking business out of Hyderabad that secretly served to transport explosives --

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and even married a local resident, Momina Khatoon.

Ghauri returned to India in 1998, responding to desperate pleas from Karim after Junaid's arrest that year left the Lashkar's Andhra Pradesh-based network in ruins. He soon discovered that the task of rebuilding the Lashkar would be less than easy. His key associate, Abdul Aziz Sheikh, had left the Lashkar to work for the mafia of Shakeel Ahmad Babu, Dawood Ibrahim's Karachi-based lieutenant. Known to Hyderabad Police old-timers as 'Bombay Javed,' Sheikh continued to operate against Hindu-chauvinist targets. In the summer of 1999, for example, he attempted to assassinate the Shiv Sena leader Milind Vaidya, who was alleged to have played a key role in the Mumbai communal pogrom of 1993. However, Sheikh now worked for cash -- not ideological commitment.

Within six months, however, Ghauri had a new network in place. He turned to Maqbool Zubair, a hitman who had worked for Mohammad Fasiuddin, a Nalagonda-based gang leader. Fasiuddin, who was killed in a 1993 police encounter, had won some community legitimacy by killing local Hindu fundamentalist leaders Papiiah Goud and Nanda Raj Goud as retaliation for the 1992 anti-Muslim pogrom in Hyderabad. With Zubair acting as his liaison with the local community, Ghauri succeeded in raising several recruits by the end of 1999, including Mansoor Khatik, who was charged with running an independent Lashkar cell in Nanded, and Sayyed Mukhtar

Ahmed Shafiq, who was made responsible for communications with the organization, headquarters near Lahore.

On February 6, 2000, the Lashkar's top ideologue, Abdul Rehman Makki, declared war. Speaking at a Lashkar convention, Makki announced the organization had set in place a new campaign to liberate Hyderabad from Hindu rule. Like Junagarh, he announced, Hyderabad had been seized by force -- and would be won back through the sword. Bombs went off soon afterwards in cinema theatres in Karimnagar and Nanded; two explosive devices planted near a Defense Research and Development Organisation facility were defused before they could do damage. All these devices were low-grade, put together with potassium permanganate, aluminum powder, and fertilizer: the very kind Karim had taught so many young operatives to make.

Less than eight weeks after these bombings, Ghauri was shot dead in a police encounter. For the Lashkar, however, his elimination would prove to be just a punctuation mark: the organization Ghauri and Karim had built would gain new personnel and develop increasingly sophisticated capabilities, which would be used to engineer the December 28 tragedy in Bangalore.

End text.

110. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)
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